

Chapter 5

Married Life

Following our wedding, the immemorial problems of a newly married couple faced us as well. My husband, being a man of modest means, had a limited bank account. So on the question of our home-to-be, he offered me the choice between a pleasant little flat, a car, and a few years of freedom, or settling down at once to buy a home. After several years of being “footloose” with room and board as a home base, my choice was immediate. I voted for settling down in a home and having children, of which I had always declared I wanted ten, not knowing that God one day would give me three thousand “children.”

So we prepared to build and bought a lot outside the city limits. But a short time later, we were faced with tragedy. The contractor whom we had paid to build our home had absconded with our money. We were left with only a partially excavated basement and an unfinished one-car garage which had been used as a tool shed. As I look back, however, I can see the Hand of God again in guidance of my life’s events. My husband and I accepted as gratefully as we could the fate that had befallen us, neither blaming the other. Hand in hand we moved happily into the garage, which was nothing more than a shed. A little paint and chintz, a grass rug, and a few wicker chairs with a generous mixture of love and industry, turned it into a delightful place to live. We pretended we were living in a country cabin, and indeed many of our facilities resembled such an abode. We used kerosene lamps. There was no plumbing, so water had to be carried by hand. We cooked on an oil stove and were warmed by a base burner. In the spring we wore hip boots even to the store. But we had many delightful times in our pioneering, as each pay envelope advanced us a short step to “civilization” until we had added onto our little cabin a living room, dinette, bedroom, kitchen and lavatory – even a small porch!

In the midst of exceeding happiness with my husband, for we loved as I believe few have loved, and the excitement of building a home from practically nothing, my separation from the church of my childhood weighed heavily upon me from time to time. Having been married outside of the church, all past connections had been severed. Yet I

continued to hope that somehow a lifeline would be thrown to me – the missing link replaced between the church of my childhood, my relatives, and friends. In the meantime, I followed the line of least resistance, and when despair would descend upon me, the verse of Scripture which in the first place had guided me, seemed to have the power to soothe and reassure me:

“Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after me; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge. Thy people shall be my people and thy God my God; where thou diest there will I die and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me and more also, if aught but death part thee and me.”

My estrangement from my church and my God, and the separation from my own people was the only unhappiness I had, but it was a bitter thread. I believe this suffering was one of the reasons I have appreciated my salvation so much. I knew I was lost. Perhaps that is why many do not value their salvation as I did – they never knew they were lost. If we would deal bread to the hungry, we must buy the loaf.

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In our third year of marriage, our first child was on the way. On February 22, 1923, our little girl was born, whom we named Doris Patricia, (who would later change the order of her name). As I went under ether for that baby, my last thought was: “If I die, I will open my eyes in hell.” I very nearly did die. They sent for my mother, but God was merciful and spared both our lives.

After I was up and around again, and mother had returned home, whenever I would prepare to bathe the baby, I would always put a cup of water on the chair alongside the wash bowl and christen Patricia. I had been taught that all unbaptized babies would not go to heaven but to Limbo, a place of eternal darkness. I didn’t know much about christening, and I feared always that I had not done it properly, so each day I would try a different method. One day I would say the words and then pour the water. The next time, I would pour the water and afterward say the words. On a third day, I would pour the water and say the words at the same time. I venture to say that few, if any, babies have been as thoroughly christened as was mine.

Patricia was a beautiful child, and when she was five years old, we discovered she had a great talent for music. At that time and ever since, she has been a great source of enjoyment to us all her life. I never had a little sister, and if Patricia had been a little boy, I would have been terribly disappointed for that reason. I always thank God that He gave me a little girl baby to make up for never having had a little sister. Patricia and I have always been more like sisters than mother and daughter.

When Patricia was creeping age, about Thanksgiving time when it was getting cold, we had an opportunity to sell our little cabin for the exact amount we had lost in our first transaction. So we moved into a new home – a five-room bungalow, modest but with modern conveniences. Everything was pleasant and desirable. Harry had a good position, and we had everything that a sensible person could wish for. Yet another joy was added when we found that another baby was on the way. On December 13, 1924, James Lee was born. Once again I was face to face with the church problem.

God had showered upon me love and affection. I had two beautiful children and all the worldly comfort one could ask for. Yet there was a reaching out for God in me - a spiritual hunger that needed to be fed. It was a starvation akin to acute pain and suffering in the midst of corporeal plenty. I have often thought there is a definite difference between conviction and conscience, and here was a demonstration of that philosophy. I had been instructed to believe that my Church was the Bride of Christ and to be outside of the Catholic Church was to be outside the Bride - the answer spelled "Hell." My conscience was trained to think in those terms, and I was convinced that I was without a church and therefore without a God.

Conscience is a tricky thing, and often we are convicted by our conscience according to the way we have taught it to think, but the conviction of God is another story. We are convicted by the Holy Spirit according to the mind of God and Truth. If I had understood God's conviction in the beginning as I do now, I would have waited patiently and calmly for God to bring me to the place in Him that He had planned for me before the foundation of the world. But because I did not understand it, and because of the insistence of my conscience and the pressure of loved ones, I went through much needless torture and suffering. I could not know that God was leading me steadily on. I could not know that in a very short time, I would find that for which

God had apprehended me when He gave me the Scripture that changed the whole trend of my life.

I could not know that I was again, after a long time of waiting, to feel once more the touch of *His Hand* on my shoulder.